

THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT

In the Administrative County of West Suffolk.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, for 1897.

Prepared in accordance with the Regulations of the Local Government Board and of the West Suffolk County Council.

Population 1881, 14571; 1891, 14456. Area 49765 acres. Number of persons per acre 0.3.

Geological formation, chalk, covered on the higher ground with Boulder Clay, and in the valleys with drift sand and gravel or brick earth. Superficially with alluvium.

Number of Parishes 21. The parish of Glemsford on the 1st of October 1896 obtained Urban powers, and became a separate and independent district.

I. BIRTHS. The number of births registered during the year was 315 equivalent to a birth-rate of 21.8 per 1000 of the population. The births and birth-rates in this district during the past seven years were :—

	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.
Births	474	466	493	423	476	436	315
Birth-rate	29.1	27.6	29.2	25.1	28.2	25.8	21.8

II. DEATHS. The number of deaths from all causes registered during the year was 160 to which 14 deaths occurring outside the district have to be added, making a total of 174 deaths belonging to the district, equivalent to a death-rate of 12.0 per 1000 of the population. The deaths and death-rates during the past seven years were :—

	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.
Deaths registered	262	305	245	256	289	236	160
Deaths belonging to the District	285	331	259	269	312	254	174
Death Rate	16.9	19.6	15.4	15.9	18.5	15.0	12.0

Infantile Mortality during 1897 was in the proportion of 111.1 deaths among infants under one year of age to a 1000 births. The proportion in 1896 was 126.4.

The seven principal Zymotic Diseases caused only 2 deaths, equal to 0.1 per 1000 of the population. The zymotic deaths and death-rate during the seven years were :—

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever,	Diphtheria,	Typhoid Fever.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhæa.	Total Deaths.	Death-rate
1891	3	...	1	17	2	23	1.2
1892	...	2	5	...	1	1	1	10	0.6
1893	...	3	3	...	1	1	6	14	0.8
1894	1	2	16	14	0	33	2.0
1895	3	1	1	..	8	13	0.8
1896	...	1	1	2	5	13	4	25	1.4
1897	2	...	2	0.1

Deaths from all other causes in the district included, deaths from Phthisis 8. Bronchitis, Pleurisy, and Pneumonia 24, Heart Disease 13, Injuries 8, Cancer 12.

The death-rate from Consumption during 1897 was 0.5 per 1000 of the population as against a mean of 1.2 in the previous six years.

From the foregoing vital statistics it may be observed the marked diminution in the number of births during the year, this falling off is not peculiar to this district but has occurred in the surrounding districts.

The death-rate is also remarkably low, this, however, may be accounted for by the almost total absence of deaths from zymotic diseases.

III. THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT. The total number of cases notified in this district during 1897, was 79, or 5.4 per thousand of the population. The Act has been compulsory in this district since 1st February 1890, and the following cases have been notified in their respective years.

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria and Croup.	Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Total cases.	Per thousand population (1891.)
1891	0	89	6	3	0	14	112	6.6
1892	0	34	5	12	0	13	64	3.8
1893	0	129	15	4	1	33	182	10.8
1894	0	41	10	2	0	25	78	4.6
1895	0	46	8	6	1	24	85	5.0
1896	0	31	3	6	0	28	68	4.0
1897	0	50	7	2	4	16	79	5.4

Scarlet Fever. There were 50 cases of this disease notified, with few exceptions all were of a mild type, and no deaths occurred. The outbreaks were in the following parishes :—

Acton	2 cases in two families. School disinfected.
Bures St. Mary	3 cases in three families, one of the cases came infected from London.
Cavendish	7 cases in three families, five occurring in one family.
Great Cornard	5 cases ; four in one family and one in another.
Long Melford	1 case.
Nayland	9 cases in four families. infection at Leavenheath School, which was disinfected during the Easter Holidays.
Newton	1 case.
Stoke-by-Nayland	4 cases in three families.
Great Walmingfield	18 cases in seven families, spread from school, which was closed for three weeks and disinfected.

In all these cases the usual precautions were taken as soon as possible, to prevent the spread of the disease. Notices with instructions were served at each house along with carbolic oil and disinfectants, and children were prevented attending school until the houses had been disinfected. Inspection of each house was made and any Sanitary defects noticed were removed or remedied.

Diphtheria. There were 7 cases of this disease notified, in August. Five cases occurred in one family in Stoke-by-Nayland. The infection was evidently introduced by a child on a visit next door, who had been ill with the disease in London. In these cases antitoxin was used by Dr. Crooks, the medical attendant, and with excellent results. In another part of the same parish in January one case occurred, here a foul midden was close to the house, this defect was remedied. At the same time a case was notified in Bures. The house though a new one was exceedingly damp and the child was subject to a sore throat. All the cases of diphtheria recovered.

Typhoid or Enteric Fever. Two cases, both boys, occurred in the district. One in Bures. This case may possibly have arisen from the lad bathing in the river at the public bathing place, which is situated below the village and also below the outlet of a public sewer. The attention of the Parish Council has been called to the danger of this site and the necessity of having the bathing place placed above the village. The other case occurred in the parish of Stoke-by-Nayland, no sanitary defects were found on the premises, it probably originated from something the boy had eaten.

Erysipelas. 16 cases were notified scattered over ten parishes most of the cases were facial. The notification of this disease in Rural districts is of no practical use.

Other infectious diseases, not notifiable, which occurred in the district were a few cases of Whooping Cough in the parishes of Bures and Cavendish, causing the death of two infants. The district has been free of measles. An epidemic of Mumps towards the close of the year prevailed in the parishes of Great Cornard and Great Waldingfield and seriously affected the school attendance.

During the year two certificates were given for the closing of schools in consequence of illness, viz. : Newton, from 22 January to 1st February on account of prevalent colds and sore throats among the children ; and Great Waldingfield, from February 1st to the 18th, owing to scarlet fever.

IV. WATER SUPPLY.—The deficiency of water in the upper part of Stanstead parish has been greatly benefitted by the Rector sinking a well 70ft. deep, for the use of his cottages.

A new well was sunk in the parish of Melford for the use of Neal's charity houses, in the place of a defective old one.

Six new wells were made for the supply of water to newly erected houses, viz. : two in Acton, one in Cavendish, two in Great Cornard, one in Stoke-by-Nayland.

Suspicion being directed to the water in the public well at Acton parish, I analysed a sample and found some traces of contamination. The well was opened and it was found that the covering was defective, allowing the drip and surface water to enter, this was repaired and a surface drain made to carry off surplus water.

Owing to illness in a house in Melford, the water from the well was analysed and found organically impure. This was remedied by cleaning out the well. Eight private wells were improved by being cleaned out.

In the parish of Alpheton, 13 cottages in Bridge-street were supplied with water, by having a spring made use of, this was put into order and three ditches cleaned out for the overflow.

In the parish of Hartest, 21 cottages at Cross Green were deprived of their supply of water, owing to a private well to which the occupiers had access being closed, the owners are about sinking a new well.

Thirteen samples of drinking water were analysed during the year, seven of which were found to be more or less impure, all of these were remedied.

V. SEWERAGE.—The main sewer in the village of Bures St. Mary became blocked, 80 yds had to be cleaned out.

In the parish of Melford a sewer which in time of heavy rains flooded part of the school premises, was remedied by diverting its course.

Twenty-four drains in different parts of the district were altered or improved owing to defects.

A large number of privies in Nayland, Cavendish, Assington, &c., were found to be too near the dwelling houses and were removed further off. In Melford 16 privies being close to the rear of the houses and injurious to health, were converted into earth closets.

An offensive sewage ditch in Cavendish which has often been a cause of offence, even when cleaned out, has been remedied by an arrangement for periodic flushing, from a head of water at the malting opposite.

A sewage ditch in Chiswick Field, Long Melford has been cleaned out, and the manhole cover so fastened as to prevent obstruction being put down the sewer connected with it.

Eight other ditches in the district which convey sewage were cleaned out.

VI. HOUSES AND COTTAGES.—There were eleven new houses erected, and inspected during the year. Two of these in Nayland were in the place of dangerous and dilapidated ones. Thirteen houses were found to be unfit for human habitation, of these 10 were in Acton, and 3 in Nayland. Eight of the houses in Acton were repaired and made into four, and the others were put into habitable repair. Of the three in Nayland, one was repaired and the others closed.

Nine cases of overcrowding were reported, two of these moved into larger houses, one left the district, and the others were abated by the removal of grown up members of the families to other places.

One of the cases was overcrowding of a dressmaker's work-room in Melford.

VII. FACTORIES AND TRADES.—No offences have arisen in connection with the mat weaving and horse-hair factories in the district. Eight workshops were inspected, in three of which sanitary defects with respect to privies were remedied.

Twenty-three slaughter houses and 30 bakehouses were inspected and any sanitary defects observed were remedied. Twenty-five dairies and cowsheds were visited and inspected, in 13 of these improvements were required to be made with respect to the water accommodation for washing purposes.

VIII. SANITARY INSPECTIONS.—Systematic as well as special inspections have been made throughout the district during the year. The particulars are annexed with respect to each parish.

One special report was made relating to the outbreak of scarlet fever in Great Waldingfield.

Tabular statements, according to the forms supplied by the Local Government Board, of sickness and mortality within the district are appended to the official reports, also a tabular statement according to the form required by the West Suffolk County Council.

J. SINCLAIR HOLDEN,
Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES, FOR 1897

	Acton	Alpheton	Assington	Boxted	Bures St. Mary	Cavendish	Chilton	Gt. Cornard	Lt. Cornard	Hartest	Hawkedon	Lawshall	Leavenheath	Melford	Nayland with Wissington	Newton	Shimpling	Someiton	Stanstead	Stoke-by-Nayland	Gt. Waldingfield	Lt. Waldingfield	TOTAL.
Complaints Received	7	1	3	...	6	1	...	2	1	2	...	3	...	19	7	...	2	...	5	1	1	...	61
Nuisances Detected	11	2	10	...	8	12	...	7	1	3	...	2	...	78	21	...	2	...	12	4	1	1	175
Nuisances abated after Notice.	4	2	9	...	3	4	...	2	...	1	...	1	...	9	19	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	56
Nuisances abated with- out Notice	6	...	2	...	5	8	...	5	1	2	...	1	...	69	1	...	2	...	9	4	2	1	117
Slaughterhouses Inspec- ted	...	...	1	...	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	4	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	23
Slaughterhouses with Sanitary defects	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Bakehouses Inspected.	...	...	...	...	4	6	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	7	3	1	...	...	2	2	...	...	30
Bakehouses with Sani- tary defects	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Dairies and Cowsheds Inspected	3	...	3	...	3	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	2	3	2	1	25
Dairies and Cowsheds with Sanitary defects	2	...	2	...	3	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	13
Houses disinfected	3	...	1	...	3	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	4	...	2	...	...	...	3	6	...	...	25
Overcrowding reported	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
Overcrowding abated	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
Houses unfit for human habitation	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Houses repaired	11	...	...	...	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Houses closed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Houses newly erected	2	...	...	...	2	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	11
Wells (new)	2	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	8
Wells improved or cleansed.	3	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
Wells closed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Privies (new)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Privies improved	1	...	7	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33	4	...	...	...	3	1	1	...	56
Sewers (new)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Sewers improved	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Drains (new)	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Drains improved	...	...	3	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	6	8	...	...	...	4	1	...	...	24
Ditches cleansed	1	1	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
Samples of Water taken	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	8
Animals so kept as to be a nuisance	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	5	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Offensive accumulations	1	...	1	...	1	3	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	11
Workshops inspected	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Workshops with Sanitary defects.	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3

ERNEST POOLE,

Sanitary Inspector.

